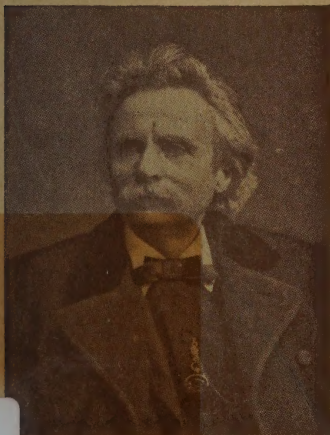


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BY WILLIAM H. HUMISTON

with illustrations



GRIEG

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EDVARD GRIEG

The question of "Nationalism in Music" is one that will always remain more or less of a question. But there is no question whatever that a great composer owes more to his genius than to his nationality—if nationality alone made a composer great, there would be millions of "great composers." Grieg has been condemned for being "too Norwegian"—he has been exalted for being "so delightfully Norwegian"; while the fact is that while he has to a small extent utilized Norwegian folk-idioms in music, he has so glorified them with his own genius that they simply give an atmosphere to his masterpieces that they would otherwise be without. In the expression "utilizing Norwegian folk-idioms" it is not meant to imply that Grieg actually uses real folk melodies—he does so in a few, a very few, cases in which explicit acknowledgment is made. It may be said, generally speaking, that any great composer writes more or less with the same melodic line that characterizes the best folk songs of his native land. This may be seen by comparing Italian folk songs with the music of the Italian composers, French folk songs with the music of French composers, German and Austrian folk songs with the music of the great German and Austrian composers. (It is possible that "futurism" and "ultra-modernism" may in the course of time render this statement untrue—for the very good reason that there is no "melody," in the ordinary acceptation of the term, in so-called "futurist music," only cacophony—and folk music is not yet cacophonic, even "jazz"!).

Edvard Grieg* was born at Bergen, Norway, June 15, 1843. His great grandfather, Alexander Grieg, was

* He was christened "Edvard Hagerup," but early in his career Grieg dropped his middle name. Like Richard Wagner's first given name, it is now used only by librarians.

born at Aberdeen, Scotland, July 19, 1739; he settled at Bergen as British consul and married a Norwegian, Margaretha Hettman, and died in 1803. His son John (1772-1835) changed the spelling to Grieg to make the Norwegian pronunciation conform to the original. John's son Alexander (1806-1875) married Gesine Judith Hagerup (1814-1875) and Edvard was their fourth child. Father Alexander Grieg was, like his forbears, English consul and a merchant—a man of the kindest heart and most lovable nature. He was fond of music, and played the piano after a fashion; but was so conservative in his nature that he never cared for the music of his "advanced" son. Mother Gesine Hagerup Grieg was much more of a musician; she had studied with Methfessel and was an excellent pianist with a thoroughly adequate technic and a deeply musical nature. It was her custom to have weekly musical evenings at which she would often perform—with as much completeness as is possible in a private house—operas of her favorite composers, Mozart and Weber. She also wrote poems and little plays. In this musical atmosphere the sensitive artistic nature of the child Edvard received its first impressions. His first experiments with the keyboard were of a harmonic nature. In a short autobiographical article originally published in the *Neue Musikzeitung* in 1905 he thus describes an experiment tried in his sixth year: "that wonderful mysterious satisfaction as I stretched out my arms over the piano, to discover—not melody, that was still far off, no—that there was such a thing as harmony. First a third, then a chord of three notes, then a full chord with four, ending at last, with both hands, O joy! a combination of five, a ninth chord! When I discovered that, my happiness knew no bounds. That was indeed a success! No later success ever excited me as that one did. I was then about five years old. A year later my mother began to give me lessons on the piano. Little did I then suspect, that disappointments awaited me. But only too soon was it clear to me that I would have to practice, and this did not suit me at all. And my mother was strict, inexorably strict. Her mother-heart must surely have found joy in the fact that many things came quickly to me—evidence of the artistic nature—but she never showed the least sign

of any satisfaction. On the contrary, there was no joking with her, if she found me dreaming at the keyboard instead of diligently practicing my lesson. And even if I summoned all my strength, to practice my finger exercises and scales, and all the other devilish technical stunts that seemed to my childish mind stones instead of bread, she still kept the reins in her hands, even if she were not in the room. One day her threatening voice came from the kitchen, where she was preparing the midday meal: 'Shame, Edvard; F sharp, F sharp, not F!' I was quite overpowered by her masterfulness. When I worked diligently, and zealously followed her instruction, it would be well with me. But my inexcusable propensity for dreaming began even then to get me into difficulties, from which I have never since been entirely free. If I had not inherited indomitable energy and musical capacity from my mother, I really believe I never would have succeeded in progressing from dreams to deeds. About the same time that my musical instruction began, I went to school, and I must confess that I was about as lazy in school as I was at the piano. The results of this period, which I have just been setting forth, certainly do not set me in a favorable light. But I believe they are characteristic, so—out with them!

"At first I went to a school for both boys and girls. How vivid are my recollections of the arithmetic lessons! We all had to do the same sums, and the first one to solve them, and thus to prove himself the best, was singled out for distinction. My ambition was aroused. Ah! thought I, I will be very smart! So a brilliant idea came to me. And so, in order to finish as quickly as possible, I left out all the figures by which the result was reached, they seemed of no importance, anyway. Aha, *that* was a success to be distinguished by an interrogation point—in other words, it was a fiasco! But I learned wisdom by experience. Since then I have learned to reckon by figures! And that was indeed always the way with spiritual successes, so I may continue courageously with the accounts of my fiascos!"

From his tenth year Grieg's parents lived in a country place near Bergen, Landaas. Here he was fertile in

resources to avoid school, which he disliked. Rains were frequent, and he would stand under a dripping roof until he was wet through, and the teacher would have to send him home. Once he did this when it had scarcely rained at all—"this time I made the intimate acquaintance of a stick; the only excuse I make for myself is that school life, such as that was, was so highly unsympathetic to me—its rawness, its coldness, its materialism—all was so repugnant to my nature that I thought of the most incredible ways of getting away from it, even if only for a short time. And now I realize that such aversions were not altogether the child's fault, but in quite as great a measure they were the fault of the school. At that time I could discover in school nothing but a boundless annoyance; I could not understand why all these obligatory torments were necessary. And today I haven't the slightest doubt, that that school developed in me only the bad, and left the good untouched."

In geography he mixed up the names, in the German lesson he translated "der gemeine Holunder" (the common elder) as "the vulgar Dutchman" (Holländer); in the English lesson he hit upon the expression "beef of veal" as the equivalent of a word meaning "roast veal." One day the word "Requiem" occurred in a lesson, and the teacher asked if anyone knew what great composer had written a musical work with that title. "Mozart," timidly answered Edvard—this so distinguished him that he received the nickname of "Mozak." He hated his schoolmates for this, but some time later a singing teacher examined them in their knowledge of the scales—here Edvard came off with flying colors. "I was the lion of the hour, and felt boundlessly happy," he wrote of the incident.

"One day," he continued,—*"I must have been twelve or thirteen years old,—I took a music-book to school, on it I had written in large letters: 'Variations on a German melody, for Piano, by Edvard Grieg, Opus I.'*" I intended to show it to a schoolmate, who had seemed especially interested. But what happened? In the midst of the German lesson this same boy began to mutter some unintelligible words, and the teacher called out: 'What is it? what have you to say?' Again a murmur,

again the teacher asked what was the matter. Finally it came out: 'Grieg has brought something.' 'What do you mean—Grieg has brought something?' "Grieg has composed something." The teacher, for reasons I have already indicated, was not very fond of me; he arose, came to me, looked at the music-book, and said, in an especially ironic voice, 'Is that so? the boy is musical—the boy is a composer—really now?' Then he opened the door into the next class-room, called the teacher and said to him: 'Here is something worth while, the little rascal here is a composer!' Both teachers turned over the pages of the book with apparent interest. All the children in both classes stood up. It was a great moment, I was anticipating a great triumph—but it was one of those times when it is not wise to be too hasty. For hardly had the other teacher turned to his own class, when my teacher suddenly changed his tactics, seized me by the hair till I saw stars, and said roughly: 'The next time you will bring your German dictionary—do you hear?—and leave this stupid stuff at home!' Ah, so near to the heights of joy, and then suddenly to be plunged to the depths of woe! How often that has happened to me later in life! And it always reminds me of that first time."

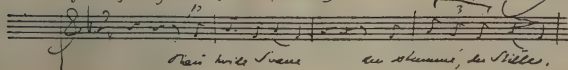
After this Grieg made the acquaintance of a young lieutenant who was musical, and a good pianist. To him Grieg showed his compositions, and even made copies of them for him. Afterwards, these were all returned, "fortunately, to be thrown into the waste basket where they belonged." The young lieutenant was a consolation for all that went wrong in school. Edvard's ambition at this time, however, was not to be an artist, but a preacher. He memorized all the poems in the school reader, and used to declaim them before the other members of his family in season and out of season. "And when my father, after dinner, would settle himself for a nap in his armchair, I could not leave him in peace, but would take my place behind a chair, which represented my pulpit, and preach away, with no regard for his feelings whatever. I watched him continually, even when he slept; and now and then when I saw him smile, I was happy—I took it as an acknowledgment of my oratorical powers. And how

I tormented him—endlessly! ‘Ah, just another little poem!’ ‘No, that’s enough.’ ‘Just one!’ What childish ambition!

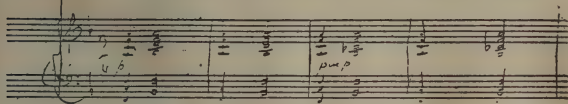
The end of my schooldays, and at the same time the separation from my father’s house, came sooner than I had expected. I was about fifteen years old, and had just entered the highest class. It was on a beautiful summer day that a man on horseback in full gallop came up the road to Landaas. Before our house he drew rein on his fiery Arab steed, and dismounted. It was He, the good God, of whom I had dreamed, but whom I never had seen—it was *Ole Bull*! It really did not seem quite right, the way this God talked and acted like a human being; he came into the room and greeted us all with friendly smiles. I remember that it was with the effect of an electric shock when his hand touched mine. Unluckily he had not brought his violin along, but he could talk about it, and he did talk fluently. Speechless with astonishment we listened to the marvellous tales of his journeys in America. That was indeed something for my childish fancy! When he was told that I had composed some music, I was obliged to sit at the piano; all my entreaties were of no avail. Today I am unable to understand what Ole Bull could find in my childish musical efforts. But he was quite serious, and spoke earnestly with my parents. The subject of the conversation was naturally not unpleasant to me. Suddenly Ole Bull came over to me, shook me by the shoulders in a way that was peculiar to him, and said: ‘You must go to Leipsic and become a musician.’ All looked lovingly at me, and I had a feeling as if a good fairy was stroking my cheek. And my kind parents! There was not a moment of hesitation or opposition; everything was quickly arranged, and the affair seemed to me the simplest thing in the world. The gratitude I owe them—and Ole Bull—only became clear to me much later. I then found myself under a magic spell and there was no room for other influences. But yet, ambition was also present; that I can not deny. And ambition is probably one of the principal ingredients, among the many different materials of which is made that very mixed salad that is finally labelled: ‘artist.’”

Langzaam en klagend (Hemel, Schreeuw)

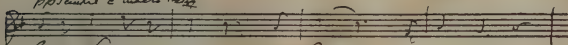
So verdrietig



Wat kleine Smeek den Schreuw, de Nieuw.



Allegretto e molto bello

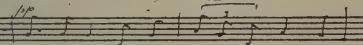


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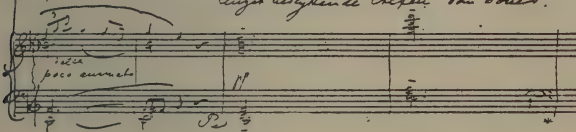
molto bello



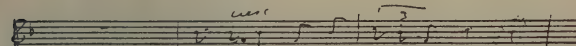
Allegretto e molto bello



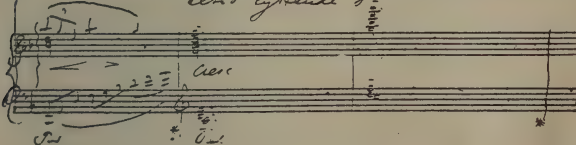
Wat kleine Smeek den Schreuw, de Nieuw.



Allegretto e molto bello



Wat kleine Smeek den Schreuw, de Nieuw.



FACSIMILE OF GRIEG'S SONG "A SWAN"

By permission of the publishers, C. F. Peters, Leipzig

And so to the Leipsic Conservatory went Edvard Grieg in his sixteenth year. At first he suffered from homesickness, but this was soon dissipated in the musical life of the city and the association with his fellow students.

"Thus to be received into the sanctuary of the Leipsic Conservatory was a confirmation of the hope that I possessed musical talent. For this was one of the entrance conditions. And that, for a young beginner, who fears nothing except to be rejected, was a colossal victory! And then to win the first artistic sympathy among my comrades—what a conquest! And then the interest of the professors—a word of praise from one of them during my lesson! This was a gratification that affected my youthful spirit in quite a different way from the applause of thousands in my later career. But these joys did not come so quickly. I was not a prize pupil—quite the contrary. During the first days I was frightfully lazy. I still vividly remember how Louis Plaidy, my first—and in the highest degree unsympathetic—piano teacher, one day when I was blundering through a Clementi sonata, a piece which I hated;—suddenly seized the music from the desk and threw it into the farthest corner of the room. As it seemed impossible for him to carry this particular experiment any further, he thundered: 'Go home and practice!'"

Plaidy's instruction was dry and without results, and Grieg's petition to be allowed to change to another teacher was granted. Plaidy understood nothing but technic, and his method, even in that, was most unintelligent. He would play in an extremely dull and uninteresting manner the slow introduction to an *allegro*, such as begins Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capriccioso," and when he reached the *allegro* would rise from the piano as if casually, saying: "and so on." Of course the bright students saw through this transparent subterfuge. And yet Plaidy's method seemed appropriate for some, for Grieg tells of hearing an English pupil of Plaidy's, J. F. Barnett, practicing the *Allegro* of Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, an hour or two before he was to play it in public with an orchestra. He took it, "not in an *adagio* tempo, but more slowly, far more slowly. Yet his performance that evening was a brilliant suc-

cess. That sort of thing, however, did not suit Grieg's temperament, and he was transferred to Ernst Ferdinand Wenzel. "This gifted friend of Schumann's was soon my idol." Later Grieg had lessons from Ignaz Moscheles, from whom he learned much. "Many malicious things," said Grieg, "were said of the teaching of old Moscheles, but I have nothing but warm praise for him. To be sure, he was naive enough to think that he could make us believe that he utilized every opportunity to belittle Chopin and Schumann, whom I adored; but his playing was wonderfully beautiful, and he often played for us, sometimes for the whole lesson hour. In particular, his interpretations of Beethoven, whom he worshipped, were marvellous. They were characterized by an almost painful conscientiousness, and dignity, distinguished, free from any cheap 'effects.' I studied many of the Beethoven Sonatas with him. Sometimes I could hardly play four bars at a time, without his taking my hands off the keys, gently pushing me off the stool and saying: 'See how *I* do it!' In this way I learned many a technical secret, and learned how to appreciate his expressive interpretations in the highest degree. A story went the rounds of the Conservatory—here I can happily not speak from my own experience—that he sometimes gave his pupils this advice: 'Play diligently the old masters, Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, and—me.' I won't vouch for this anecdote. But I will say that I have never regretted the fact that at his advice I played through all the twenty-four Studies of his Opus 70. I liked them, and so I did my best to satisfy him, and myself as well. He must have noticed this, for he became more friendly from day to day, and once, even though it was a trifling matter, yet it was to me an important success, when after I had played one of his études through without being interrupted, he turned to the other students and said: 'Gentlemen, that is what I call *musical* playing.' How happy I was! On that day the whole world lay bathed in sunlight before me."

Harmony Grieg studied with E. F. Richter, who taught "the solution of musical riddles," and not the writing of music. Dr. Robert Papperitz, with whom at the same time he had theory lessons, gave him "a freer rein." But finally came Moritz Hauptmann—"to this

lovable old man I will be everlastingly grateful for all his intelligent hints and thoroughgoing explanations. For him rules meant nothing, there were only laws of nature. Before I had met Hauptmann (I was only sixteen and still wore short trousers) I had the honor of playing one of my own compositions at a private examination. As I finished and was leaving the piano, to my great astonishment I saw an old gentleman rise from the professor's table and come towards me. He laid his hand on my shoulder and said: 'Good morning, young man, we must be friends.' It was Hauptmann; and naturally, from that moment I loved him. During his last years he was an invalid, and gave his lessons in his own house, in the St. Thomas School, the old home of Sebastian Bach. Here I had the good fortune to become better acquainted with him. I can still see him—he sits on the sofa, in dressing-gown and cap, with a large silk handkerchief in his hand, his spectacles buried deep in my exercise book."

In the famous conservatory there was very little pedagogical system. Teachers would frequently assign the pupils tasks which required a knowledge of things they had not yet studied. For example, Reinecke, with whom Grieg studied later, asked him to write a string quartet, when he had no knowledge either of the musical form required, or of the details of the technic of stringed instruments. So Grieg set to work to study the quartets of Mozart and Beethoven. He wrote one movement; Ferdinand David, the famous violinist, thought it would be considered "music of the future." "In that he was mistaken," says Grieg, "for it was quite in the style of Schumann, Gade, and Mendelssohn; but I soon realized that it was quite mediocre and was thankful to David for preventing its performance." Grieg wishes it were destroyed, but he traded it to a fellow student, who had taken a fancy to it, for a copy of the partitur of the Schumann Piano Concerto, which was not then published in partitur, only in orchestral parts, from which the student had put together and copied out a complete partitur. "I think with a shudder that this piece may still be in existence in some southern European country." After this, Reinecke told Grieg to write an Overture. "I, who had no inkling whatever of instrumen-

tation, or even of the separate orchestral instruments, *I* should write an *Overture!*" Here he stuck fast—"it seems incredible, but it was true, that in the whole Leipsic Conservatory there was not a class in which one could study the fundamental principles of orchestration." But there was orchestral music to hear, and occasionally partiturs could be studied—the miniature scores of today make it so much easier now than it was then!

Among Grieg's fellow students were Arthur Sullivan, the pianists Franklin Taylor, Edward Dannreuther, and Walter Bache, who was later a pupil of Liszt. Of Sullivan he says that his music to Shakespeare's "Tempest" already showed him a skilled master. With Sullivan Grieg once followed from the partitur a performance of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul"—"and such a partitur! It was Mendelssohn's own manuscript which Sullivan had borrowed for this occasion from the director of the Conservatory, Conrad Schleinitz, Mendelssohn's intimate friend. With this director at first Grieg did not get on well. But at one of their disagreements Grieg held his ground so boldly and replied to the director's arguments politely but firmly, that the angry Schleinitz was astonished—and then friendly. Once Grieg's check from home did not arrive in time, and he was obliged, for the only time in his life, to pawn his watch. In some way unknown to Grieg Schleinitz heard of it, and told Grieg never to do it again, but to come to him if he should ever be caught that way again.

In the spring of 1860 Grieg broke down from overwork, and suffered a serious illness—pleurisy—from which he recovered with only one good lung. He recuperated at Bergen, but returned to Leipsic before he had fully regained his strength where he remained until the spring of 1862. Before he left the Conservatory he was chosen from among the students to play at a public concert in the Gewandhaus. He played some of his own piano compositions, and was much applauded.

Of this period of his life Grieg writes: "We Norwegians develop slowly; one seldom shows what is in him before he is eighteen. The atmosphere of Leipsic was a veil before my eyes. When I arrived in Den-

mark a year later, the veil fell, and my astonished glance fell on a world of beauty that the Leipsic pleasures had hidden from me. *I had found myself*, and with the greatest ease I overcame difficulties that at Leipsic had seemed insurmountable. With a far more free imagination I composed one work after another. That my music at first would be criticised as artificial and strange did not worry me a bit; I knew now what I wanted, and steered courageously for the goal that I had set for myself."

Grieg returned to Bergen in the spring of 1862 and gave a successful concert of his own compositions. He went to Copenhagen where he became acquainted with Gade, who was friendly, but who seemed to Grieg too much under the influence of Mendelssohn. But Grieg met about this time a young musician only a year older than himself, Richard Nordraak (1842-1866) who confirmed him in his already budding sympathy with the national element—Norwegian—in his music. Grieg was now well equipped technically, while his friend was much like certain of that Russian group of "five"* in his depreciation of technical equipment. Consequently it was Nordraak's "artist soul" rather than his actual achievements which influenced Grieg so profoundly. Grieg dedicated to Nordraak his "Humoresques"; Nordraak modestly remarked: "They are as good as if I had written them myself." Grieg admired Nordraak's songs, and recognized his fructifying influence on his own creative ability all his life. "Then there fell," said Grieg, "the scales from my eyes; I learned first from him the Norwegian folk songs and therein recognized my own nature. We foreswore such Mendelssohnized effeminate Scandinavianism, and started on the new road with enthusiasm, the road on which is now found the Northern School."

Grieg became acquainted with the Danish composers Horneman and Matthison Hansen and formed with Nordraak a society, "Euterpe," to bring out Nordic compositions exclusively. But Nordraak died—in 1866—at the age of twenty-four, and Grieg was thus deprived of a valuable helper.

* See Little Biography: Rimsky-Korsakoff.

In Copenhagen Grieg met for the first time his cousin Nina Hagerup, with her charmingly fresh voice, and notable gifts as a singer and interpreter. Born in Bergen in 1845, her parents settled in Copenhagen when she was eight years old. Her grandfather, Edvard Hagerup, was Grieg's maternal grandfather; her mother had been a well known Danish actress. Nina sang Grieg's songs, Grieg fell in love with the singing and the singer—she promptly gave her heart to the composer and man (the song, "I love thee," was composed under the inspiration of this budding love), but Nina's mother objected:

"He is nothing, he has nothing, and makes music to which no one listens." Yet "love will find a way," and Edvard and Nina were married June 11, 1867. The little daughter of the opera singer Steenberg was invited to avoid the awful number 13 at the wedding feast (silly superstitions affect apparently intelligent people); her father assured the anxious parents: "Be easy, he will be world famous." Steenberg later became a celebrated propagandist for Grieg's songs.

Ole Bull had a summer residence on an island about twenty miles east of Bergen. Thither Grieg went in 1864 as the friendship, begun in 1858, was continued. They would play Mozart's sonatas; sometimes Grieg's brother John, an excellent cellist, would join them in trios. Sometimes they would go on walking tours through the mountain regions and listen to the folk music of the peasants. Grieg's determination to follow the direction in which his genius led him grew to a fixed purpose, in spite of Ole Bull and Grieg's father, who both disapproved of this course. In 1865 Grieg composed his first orchestral work, "Overture—In Autumn," a work which Gade disliked extremely. But Grieg did not accept his advice to rewrite it.

In the autumn of 1866 Grieg moved to Christiania, where he lived eight years, though there was an interval of a year—1869-70—which he spent in Rome on a scholarship furnished by the state. He gave a concert of Norwegian music in Christiania shortly after his arrival, when he played his first violin sonata with Neruda (later Lady Hallé) and accompanied his fiancée Nina Hagerup in songs of Nordraak, Kjerulf, and him-

self. The concert evoked much enthusiasm on the part of both public and critics. Grieg threw himself into the musical life of the city, conducted orchestral concerts of the Philharmonic Society of Christiania, and gave piano lessons to help support himself and his young wife. Kjerulf was an enthusiastic supporter of Grieg's efforts, but he died in 1868. With Björnson Grieg's relations were friendly, though the poet was not musical. With the rather weak orchestral and vocal forces at his command Grieg conducted performances of Schumann's "Paradise and the Peri," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," Mozart's "Requiem," and works of his compatriots Gade, Kjerulf, and Lindblad. Yet his efforts in behalf of the best music suffered the rebuff which mediocrity is always ready to hand to genius. Kjerulf's death was a blow, and the only child he and Nina ever had died at the age of thirteen months, and things looked rather dark. But a sudden ray of light penetrated the gloom. A letter, dated Rome, December 29, 1868, arrived unexpectedly from Franz Liszt, who had made the acquaintance of his violin sonata, and who, in a most cordial manner, invited Grieg to come to see him. Grieg, partly through the influence of this letter, secured a scholarship from the state, and went to Rome in the fall of 1869. The meeting with Liszt, however, did not take place until the middle of February, 1870, as Liszt had not yet arrived in Rome.* The meeting is described in detail in a letter to his parents: how, advised by the Danish musician Ravnkilde, then living in Rome, that Liszt would expect him to bring something of his own; how he played "indian giver" and took back from his friend Winding the only available copy of his second violin sonata, and taking that under his arm with some songs and the funeral march in memory of Nordraak; how Liszt received him in a manner that put him quite at his ease, which was somewhat disturbed when Liszt asked him to play the work; how he played through one movement with Liszt filling out the violin part at the piano; how he then played the Humoresque for piano solo, and then asked Liszt to play; how Liszt readily consented and played the Epilogue of "Tasso"; how after Liszt's playing Grieg felt a natural embarrassment at playing any more him-

self, and how Liszt then himself undertook the rest of the violin sonata in such a way that violin part and piano part both seemed to sound in their completeness; all this is told in full detail in the letter. The next day the sonata was played by Sgambati and Pinelli (a Joachim pupil); Liszt was present and led off in the applause.

In April Grieg wrote his parents another long letter about a later meeting with Liszt, when he took with him the partitur of his piano concerto, which he had written during the summer of 1868, at the Danish village of Sölleröd. Grieg, not having practiced the concerto at all, was unwilling to play, so Liszt played it—"he does not content himself with playing, no, he converses and criticises at the same time. He makes brilliant remarks, now to one, now to another in the company, nods significantly to the right or left, especially when something particularly pleases him. In the Adagio and yet more in the Finale he reached a climax both in his playing and his approval." The episode towards the close of the Finale, when the full orchestra enters and the G sharp changes to G natural, here Liszt rose from the piano "and fairly roared the theme. When he reached the G natural he stretched out his arms like a commanding emperor and called out: 'G, G, not G sharp! Wonderful!' Then he returned to the piano and repeated the whole passage. When he had finished he handed the music to the composer with the words: "Go on, I tell you, you have the right stuff in you! And don't let them scare you!"

Grieg once submitted the partitur of the concerto to his old teacher, Carl Reinecke, who returned no answer. After waiting a long time, Grieg called to get the score. Reinecke received him cordially but never mentioned the concerto. So Grieg walked home with the score, but in no friendly state of mind towards Reinecke. Perhaps, too, Reinecke had pompously delivered himself of his little sermon on the "moderns," which, according to the late Edward Falck, he was accustomed to preach whenever opportunity offered: "The *moderns* are Berlioz,

* Liszt had given up his permanent residence in Rome; see Little Biography—"Liszt."

Wagner, Liszt. Berlioz is merely a dilettante, Wagner has some talent as a composer, but no knowledge of instrumental forms, Liszt is not a composer at all." Neither was Grieg, probably, in the estimation of Reinecke, who as a composer, certainly lived *after* his time!

Giovanni Sgambati wrote in regard to the concert given in Rome by Grieg and his wife: "One can think of nothing more pleasing than the soirée given by those genial and splendid artists from the North. Mrs. Nina Grieg has a voice that, though not a powerful one, yet is sufficient to interpret the songs of her husband in a completely artistic manner and with *nuances* of unusual charm. One feels that she puts her whole soul into them, and if I may so express it, gets from the performance the greatest artistic joy of her life. In the four-hand playing of the Norwegian Dances, which she played with her husband, Mrs. Grieg also showed that in every sense of the word she is a true artist."

In 1870 Grieg and his wife returned to Christiania, when he composed the beautiful short cantata for soprano and alto soli, women's chorus and orchestra, which he dedicated to Liszt. Its title is "At the Cloister Gate," Opus 20; the text is from Björnson's "Arnljot Gelline." This work is a choral gem of the first water—why it is so universally neglected at choral concerts with orchestra is one of those "inexplicable mysteries." Perhaps if choral societies would do more works like this, and less of such uninspired works as they usually choose, they would not be in financial straits so often, or be obliged to call on Handel's "Messiah" to fill their exchequer. In 1871, with Johann Svendsen, Grieg founded the "Musical Society," alternating with Svendsen as conductor; they had bitter opponents among the musical mediocrities. In 1873 Grieg decided to leave Christiania, where in spite of his adversaries he had developed both as composer and conductor to a degree of mastership. During this period he had composed, in addition to "At the Cloister Gate," the "Pictures from Folk-life," Opus 17, "Lyric Pieces," Opus 22, for piano solo, the second violon sonata, the piano concerto, a fragment of an opera, finished years later as "Olav Trygvason," and some songs. Also he finished

his short cantata for baritone solo, male voices and orchestra—"Landsighting," another episode in the history of Olav Trygvason, Norway's famous hero of the tenth century. This is a work which is melodious, rich in harmonic treatment and orchestral color, and full of atmosphere. "Sigurd Jorsalfar" was written to a play by Björnson, produced in 1872—a Suite therefrom consists of an Introduction, an Intermezzo ("Borghild's Dream"), and a Triumphal March, one of the greatest of all marches.

In 1874 the Norwegian Government granted an annuity of 1600 crowns (about \$425.00) to the Griegs for their services in behalf of the national musical art. At this juncture, in January, 1874, a long letter from Henrik Ibsen arrived, containing an offer to write music—solos, choruses, and incidental music—to his play, "Peer Gynt." The play as originally written was not intended to be acted, but Ibsen was contemplating the arrangement of a stage version, and his letter (quoted entire in H. T. Finck's "Grieg and his Music") gives many details of the poet's ideas for musical treatment. Grieg set to work at Sandwike near Bergen, but there were many delays owing to changes in the poet's plans for the stage arrangement. So Grieg gave a portion of his time to the composition of other works, and penned his splendid "Ballade" for piano solo, some songs, among which is the beautiful "A Swan," and "The Waterlily." At length "Peer Gynt" was finished, and the first performance was given at the Christiania Theater on February 24, 1876. It was such a success that it was given thirty-six times that year, and was also given in other Scandinavian cities. Grieg was not present at the première, but was told that the orchestral effects were not well brought out. It was eleven years before any of the music was published, when two Suites, both arranged by the composer, were brought out, and became immensely popular. The orchestral score of the whole work was published in 1908, while a piano score did not appear until 1918. The play is much like Goethe's "Faust," especially the second part, in that it is fantastic and not well adapted to stage performance. It is also similar in that its hero is a type, as Faust is. Grieg says of the play: "I hold it to be Ibsen's

greatest creation. In the fatherland it will always be considered a monument to him and keep its place on the stage, even as a folk play."

In the summer of 1876 Grieg visited Bayreuth to hear the first performances of Wagner's "Ring." Although a profound admirer of Wagner's art Grieg never wanted to be considered a "Wagnerite," as such were apt to be onesided in their sympathies, and more or less out of touch with the work of other masters. Wagner himself was by no means a "Wagnerite." Grieg wrote some articles about the festival for the Bergen "Post." He wrote afterwards that he was "at the same time glowing with enthusiasm and severely critical. Without being a 'Wagnerite' I was at that time what I am now; an adherent, nay, a worshipper of the mighty genius."

Grieg retired to the quiet Lofthus in the early summer of 1877, and remained there until the fall of 1878—constantly busy either with composition or in learning the folk-tunes of the peasants, who in that part of the country were really of aristocratic descent; "the Hardanger peasants," says Schjelderup, "possess a fine culture, their artistic sense and their spiritual gifts are quite remarkable." At Lofthus Grieg built a little house—like MacDowell's "log cabin"—on a little peninsula in the fjord. The little house was at first so near the road that Grieg was annoyed by curiosity seekers, so the peasants were summoned, and a "moving bee" was indulged in, and the little house moved to a spot distant from the road, but near the water. Now the unwelcome visitors came in row-boats, so eventually this was given up. In this little house on the Hardanger Fjord were written several important compositions: the beautiful string quartet, Op. 27, the Album for male voices, Op. 30,—mostly free arrangements of Norwegian folk-tunes, "Astray on the Mountain" ("Der Einsame"), Op. 32, for baritone, string orchestra and two horns. This last is one of Grieg's finest inspirations, comparing with the "Peer Gynt" music in its portrayal of legendary Norwegian atmosphere.

In the spring of 1879 Grieg gave with great success a series of concerts in Christiania and Copenhagen, and in 1880 he undertook the conductorship of the musical

society, "Harmonien," in Bergen. His material was poor, and it was uphill work, but he persevered for two years, and accomplished some real results in spite of obstacles. During this period he composed some of his loveliest songs and "Lyric Pieces," the "Holberg Suite" and the Cello Sonata. The latter is dedicated to the composer's brother John, who, though a first-rate cellist, gave up music as a profession and went into partnership with his father. The Suite, "From Holberg's Time," Op. 40, was originally written to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754), the founder of Danish literature, who was born in Bergen. The suite was written for string orchestra in the style of the music of that time and was afterwards arranged for piano.* "Bergliot," Op. 42, probably belongs to this period. The poem is by Björnson; it narrates a tragic incident of one of the old sagas (Harald Hardrada's Saga) and is to be recited to an orchestral accompaniment. This form is rightly regarded as a hybrid—the speaking voice does not readily blend with the tones of musical instruments; yet such is the beauty and effectiveness of this work that it may be regarded as one of the exceptions that prove the rule.

In 1885 Grieg built the villa which he named "Troldhaugen" (Hill of the Sprites), which remained his home for the rest of his life. He took his tiny "tune-house" with him and set it down at some distance from the house, in a much more retired spot than at Lofthus. "Troldhaugen" is on a peninsula some distance from the railroad station, "Hop," about four miles from Bergen. Grieg wrote several letters to his publisher, Dr. Abraham (of the firm of Peters), during the building of the house and afterward which show his extreme delight in the new home. In one characteristic letter he refers to "the little fiddle fairy Teresina Tua, who has been at Troldhaugen for several days, where she not only played the violin, but also drank champagne—both of which she does wonderfully! This fairy is

* This Suite is often quoted in books on instrumentation as a beautiful model of how to arrange for strings a piece originally written for piano. But it so happens that this work was written first for strings, as the composer states in a letter to his publishers dated Bergen, March 24, 1885.

also a most delightful little person, and if I ever again commit any violin crimes, she will be the guilty one."

Grieg was a great lover of nature, and loved, so far as his limited strength permitted, to climb mountains. But he was so attached to the country immediately surrounding Bergen that he seldom went far from home. Even Jotunheim, a wonderful region not far from Bergen, he did not visit until late in life. The climate of Bergen—rainy most of the time—was not favorable to his health, yet he could not tear himself away from it. Moreover, his health was constantly so precarious that it often not only prevented him from working, but caused him great suffering. In spite of this he was seldom in what would be called a "bad humor"; his letters often sparkle with wit. He made several concert trips to England and the continent, but he could not bring himself to undertake such a long voyage as would be necessary to come to America. In 1888 he visited London, where he appeared with the Philharmonic Society on May 3 in a triple capacity, as pianist, composer, and conductor. He played his piano concerto and conducted his "Elegiac Melodies," arousing great enthusiasm. He visited Birmingham where his conducting of his "In Autumn" Overture made a great impression on George Grove. In March of the following year he again appeared with the London Philharmonic; this time his wife sang some of his songs, and he conducted the first "Peer Gynt" suite, again stirring great enthusiasm. In Copenhagen, in 1889 Grieg received an ovation of the most enthusiastic description after a performance of "Olaf Trygvason"; but the composer attributed it largely to the patriotic feeling aroused on account of its subject. In 1890 Grieg was made a member of the French Academy of Fine Arts. This was not the first time such an honor had been conferred on him—in 1872 he had been made a member of the Swedish Academy of Music, in 1893 the degree of Doctor of Music was conferred on him by the University of Cambridge. Such honors meant something, and he valued them; but for "decorations" and badges he cared little, but accepted them in order not to be discourteous.

In 1891 a concert and banquet were given in honor

of his twenty-fifth anniversary as a concert giver in the city of Christiania. The house was sold out for the concert, and at the banquet were many artists, writers, and journalists, including Ibsen. There was even a torchlight procession of the students. "The whole festival," wrote Grieg, "was such as I have never experienced, nor expect to experience again. I only hope it has not demoralized me."

The silver wedding anniversary of the Griegs was celebrated in enthusiastic fashion by his admirers in Bergen. The presents included silverware—of course—and a Steinway Grand Piano, on which Grieg had to play to his guests, and his wife sang to his accompaniment. The weather was "heavenly beautiful after two weeks rain," wrote Grieg. Guests streamed in, and with the assistance of kind friends, aided by telephone and telegraph, they were all served with supper in the garden, to the number of over a hundred. At nine o'clock two hundred and thirty singers appeared and sang festival songs composed for the occasion, while "punch flowed like Rhine wine."

In 1896 and 1897 Grieg again made a tour which included London, Paris, Leipsic, Munich, Copenhagen, and Vienna; in the latter city he played a number of his "Lyric Pieces"—"with the utmost delicacy and a rare sympathy of touch, of softer, finer quality than has ever been my good fortune to hear"—wrote the correspondent of the *Musical Courier*. Later another concert was given, in which Busoni played the piano concerto and Grieg conducted the "In Autumn" overture, the "Holberg" Suite and "At the Cloister Gate." In 1897 he visited Holland, whence he wrote to his publisher: "I tell you, this is the life! I could write ten sheets about it! About the Dutch oysters alone I could write nine." The concert was a great success and he went on to London, where at Windsor he was received by Queen Victoria with the words: "I am a great admirer of your works."

In 1898 Grieg organized a musical festival at Bergen on a large scale. He met with some opposition because he found it necessary to bring over the "Konzerthgebouw" orchestra from Amsterdam, with Willem Mengelberg as conductor—as the local forces were not adequate. The

success of the festival exceeded all expectations. The hall, seating 3000, was sold out for all six concerts, which were entirely devoted to Norwegian music. Johann Svendsen was Grieg's efficient collaborator and shared his success. Grieg wrote Dr. Abraham that he had never heard better performances anywhere.

In 1899 Grieg was invited to Paris by Edouard Colonne. But such was his indignation over the result of the Dreyfus trial that he wrote Colonne as follows: "While thanking you very much for your kind invitation, I regret to say that after the issue of the Dreyfus trial I cannot quite make up my mind to come to France. I am indignant at the contempt for justice shown in your country, and therefore unable to enter into relations with the French public. Pardon me if I cannot feel differently." Grieg wrote an account of the affair to Dr. Abraham; he was with Björnson when the news of the result of the trial came, and was somewhat under the influence of Björnson's excitability. Otherwise he would probably not have imputed the crime of a few French militarists to the whole French people. Grieg was roundly abused by many prominent Frenchmen at the time, and there were disagreeable sequences later.

In 1900 Grieg lost his beloved friend Dr. Abraham, head of the German music publishing house of Peters, and the next year his brother John died, both of whom he mourned deeply.

In 1903 came another invitation to Paris—this time Grieg accepted. There was some opposition on the part of the same element which made such disgraceful scenes at the performances of Wagner's "Tannhäuser" in 1861, and which fortunately does not represent the real soul of France; but Grieg stood his ground, and the concert resulted in an ovation for the composer. The programme contained the Overture, "In Autumn"; three romances with orchestral accompaniment—"Solweig's Cradle Song," "Monte Pincio," and "A Swan," sung by Ellen Gulbranson; the Piano Concerto, played by Raoul Pugno; the two "Elegiac Melodies" for strings; "At the Cloister Gate"; and the first Peer Gynt suite;—the concert closed with the finale of Wagner's "Göt-

terdämmerung," Mme. Gulbranson singing the part of Brünnhilde.

In June came another celebration—Grieg's sixtieth birthday. Congratulations poured in from all sides; the orchestra of the National Theater gave a concert, and Björnson made a speech, closing with a poem which he had written for the occasion. The telegrams and letters amounted to over five hundred, "I didn't know I had so many friends," wrote Grieg to Schjelderup.

In spite of failing health, Grieg gave three concerts in Stockholm in 1904, appeared as soloist in Christiania in 1906, and made a tour which included Prague, Warsaw, London, and Amsterdam. On his return he wrote on July 4, 1906: "Now I am at home again on my hill with a heart full of thankfulness and pleasant memories. That I am still capable of artistic deeds fills me with joy." But Grieg made his last appearances as conductor the next April, when he conducted several concerts at Berlin and Kiel. His health was failing rapidly, and though he was quite active in rowing and walking the strain was beginning to tell on him. During July he had as his guest at Trolldhaugen Percy Grainger, with whom he rowed and walked—even taking him on a climb up a nearby mountain, Blaamanden. Towards the end of August Grieg's physician sent him to a hospital in Bergen where he died in his sleep early in the morning of September 4.

Grief was universal all over Norway, and among music lovers the world over as well. The State of Norway took charge of the funeral arrangements, which were as elaborate as for a king. A far greater than most kings had passed away, and a universal expression of grief was indeed appropriate. The services were held in the Museum of Art; the musical part included "In Spring," played by a string orchestra, "Folksong," by a male chorus, and after the laying down of the wreaths another song for male voices and finally the Nordraak Funeral March—all Grieg's music. The orchestra was conducted by Halvorsen, conductor at the National Theater, who had married one of Grieg's nieces; as the Funeral March had only existed for band, Halvorsen hurriedly scored it for orchestra "so completely in Grieg's manner," said Adolph Brodsky,

who played first violin, "that it sounded as if done by Grieg himself. Grieg's remains were cremated and the urn deposited in a romantic spot, in a grotto in a steep cliff projecting into the fjord and visible from Troidhaugen. The grotto was sealed and a stone slab was cemented in the cliff with an inscription of only two words—EDVARD GRIEG.

AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

Sara C. Bull, Henry T. Finck, Philip Hale, Daniel Gregory Mason, Walter Niemann, Gerhard Schjelderup.

GLOSSARY

Chamber Music: Music written for a small combination of instruments, such as a string quartet—first and second violins, viola and cello—or combination of piano with one or more solo stringed instruments. Occasionally wind instruments are used. The classic form for chamber music is the "sonata form."

Concerto: A composition for a solo instrument with accompaniment for full orchestra. It is usually in several movements, one of which is in sonata form.

Partitur: The full score of a work for voices or orchestra, or both; containing all the instrumental and vocal parts on parallel staves. In an orchestral partitur the usual order of instruments, from top to bottom, is as follows: Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons, Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, Tuba, Drums, Harp; First Violins, Second Violins, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses. The voice parts—Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass—are now usually put just above the strings; but the classic position is directly above the cellos—a survival of the time when the accompanist played from a figured bass.

Sonata: Literally, something "sounded," i.e. played, in distinction to *Cantata*, something "sung." The sonata form was developed by Stamitz (1717-1757), Haydn, and Mozart, till it reached its zenith in the mighty Beethoven. The term "sonata form" is applied to only one movement, usually, of a "Sonata"

in several movements. In a movement in sonata form there are two or more principal subjects, a free development of them, and a restatement of the principal subjects in nearly their original form. The classic "Overture" is a single movement, for orchestra, in "sonata form." A "Symphony" is simply a sonata on a large scale, and scored for full orchestra.

LIST OF GRIEG'S WORKS

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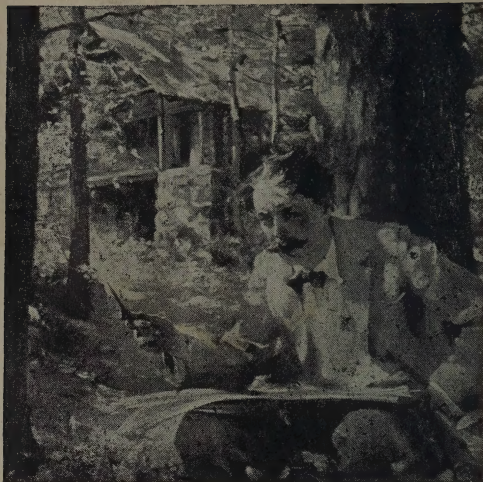
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| Op. 53. 2 Melodies for String
Orchestra. | Peer Gynt, complete. |
| Op. 55. Peer Gynt Suite II. | Unfinished Quartet in F. |
| | 6 Songs, arranged with Or-
chestra Accompaniment (E.). |



MacDowell composing his "Woodland Sketches"

STEINWAY

THE INSTRUMENT OF THE IMMORTALS

BLESSED are those woodlands of New Hampshire where Edward MacDowell met the wild rose; where his spirit discoursed with the departed Indian; where his soul "overflowed with tenderness and caprice." Blessed, too, is the old Steinway in the log cabin where he lived—for was it not the Voice which uttered first his fine romantic melodies? And is it not fitting that the Instrument of the Immortals should have been *his* instrument—just as it was Richard Wagner's and Franz Liszt's three score years ago—just as it is Paderewski's and Hofmann's and Rachmaninoff's to-day?

STEINWAY & SONS, Steinway Hall

New York.

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